

Message Text

SECRET

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ARA - MR. ROGERS

ARA:NC - MR. DEVINE

ARA:EP - MR. WEBER

ARA:BC - MR. FIMBRES

S/S - MR. ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 055735

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, CI, BL, PE, VE

SUBJECT: THE SECRETARY'S COMMITMENT TO PRESIDENT PEREZ

- . TO ASSIST ON THE BOLIVIAN OUTLET PROBLEM

1. DURING THEIR FEBRUARY 17 DISCUSSIONS IN CARACAS, PRESIDENT PEREZ SUGGESTED THAT THE SECRETARY, DURING HIS VISIT TO LIMA, ASK IF THE UNITED STATES COULD DO ANYTHING TO ASSIST IN ARRIVING AT A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF A BOLIVIAN OUTLET TO THE SEA. THE SECRETARY SAID THAT HE WOULD DO SO.

2. ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, THE SECRETARY DISCUSSED THE ISSUE AT LENGTH WITH PERUVIAN FOREIGN MINISTER DE LA FLOR. THE FONMIN REFERRED TO THE 1879 WAR IN WHICH CHILE GAINED

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160,000 SQUARE KILOMETERS OF TERRITORY AND PERU LOST

130,000 SQUARE KILOMETERS, LEAVING HIS COUNTRY WITH GREAT ECONOMIC COSTS AND EVEN DEEPER SCARS. BOLIVIA, HE CONTINUED BEGAN THE DAY AFTER THE WAR ENDED TO SEEK AN OUTLET TO THE SEA THROUGH EITHER ANTOFAGASTA (INVOLVING CHILE AND BOLIVIA ONLY) OR THROUGH ARICA (INVOLVING PERU AS WELL). DE LA FLOR NOTED THAT BOLIVIA AND CHILE HAD HELD MANY TALKS, PARTICULARLY IN THE 1968-1971 PERIOD WHICH HAD LED TO A RENEWAL OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. FINALLY IN DECEMBER, 1975, THE TWO PROPOSED TO PERU THAT A

NARROW STRIP NORTH OF ARICA SERVE AS THE SOLUTION.

3. DE LA FLOR SAID THAT THE GOP MUST STUDY THE PROPOSAL CAREFULLY BECAUSE OF 1) LOCAL SENTIMENT WHICH DOES NOT CHANGE FROM DAY TO DAY AND 2) A NEED FOR A CAREFUL EXAMINATION OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF A CHANGE IN THE STATUS QUO. THE GOP WILL TALK NOW, HE CONTINUED, BUT WE WANT A REAL SOLUTION, ONE WHICH WILL CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE AND THE SOUND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR THE REGION. AND, ONE QUESTION IS: WILL THE PROPOSED STRIP CONSTITUTE THIS REAL SOLUTION?

4. THE FONMIN DESCRIBED THE WIDTH OF THE STRIP AS RANGING BETWEEN 7 AND 8 KILOMETERS AT THE COAST TO 30 IN THE HIGHLANDS, NOTING THAT ONE PROBLEM WAS THE IMPLICATIONS IT WOULD HAVE ON THE 200-MILE TERRITORIAL WATER BOUNDARIES OF PERU AND CHILE. DE LA FLOR DENIED THAT PERU WAS PLAYING FOR TIME, BUT ONLY SEEKING A PERMANENT SOLUTION AND TIME FOR PREPARING THE PERUVIAN POPULACE WHICH HAD ONLY HEARD OF THE PROPOSAL LAST DECEMBER.

5. THE SECRETARY TOLD THE FONMIN THAT WE ARE NOT COMMITTED TO A BOLIVIAN OUTLET ALTHOUGH WE GENERALLY FAVOR ITS ATTAINMENT WITHOUT AN INTEREST IN ANY PARTICULAR SOLUTION. WE DO FAVOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO ALL THREE PARTIES WITHOUT PRESSURE. (THE FOREIGN MINISTER RESPONDED THAT PERU WANTED NO TENSION.) THE SECRETARY ASKED DE LA FLOR TO ALLOW US TO SEE THE GOP'S CONCLUSIONS ONCE THEY WERE DEVELOPED.

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6. ACTION: THE AMBASSADOR IS INSTRUCTED TO DRAW UPON THE FOREGOING IN COMPLYING WITH THE SECRETARY'S COMMITMENT TO PRESIDENT PEREZ TO RAISE OUR INTEREST IN THE ISSUE WITH THE PERUVIANS AND TO REPORT BACK TO PEREZ. KISSINGER

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